

[Maritime Verse]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace,

DATE February 23, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime Verse: Left Rudder

1. Date and time of interview February 20th.
2. Place of interview National Maritime Union 126 11th Avenue New York City
3. Name and address of informant Left Rudder - (Carmody) - Seamen's Church Institute
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Jenkins, Educational Director, National Maritime Union
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

This will be found in a later form sheet.

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FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 27 Hamilton Terrace

DATE February 23, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime Verse: Left Rudder MY PICKET CARD A card I prize as souvenir
Enshrined in folder frame, Gives number of my Union-book, Department and full name,
It shows exact amount of days That I was on the "Line" And there is nought I value Than
that old card of mine O, be it far from me to boast — And yet, I'm justly proud — Of that
old card that tells the world I mingled with the crowd, Who did respond to Neptune's call
And gave of their support, Aiding — in some little way To hold the Union fort. And, as
I gaze upon that card Enclosed within its shrine, We trudge again in slush and mud As
picket men with "sign" And comes to mind the wintry nights, And dreary afternoons, The
battles that were fought and won With stooges, [yeggs?] and goons. We dine again on
"watered soup" And three-days old stale bread, I see the strike-fires that we kept By dock,
and pier, and shed. I hear the songs that then were sung, The years we loved to tell, And
ring of youthful laughter as That winter's snowflakes fell. Again we give "off-duty time" To
picket line en masse, Forgetting sect, and faith, and creed, With thought for only "Class,"
And wonder to myself, how come There was no "wrangling" then? Nor petty feuds, and
clashing cliques For slander, tongue, no pen. And then, somehow, that sacred card More
sombre thought revives, As comes to me the memory Of men who gave their lives, And as

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I placed that souvenir Back in its folder frame, I feel a gladness in my heart — That I had played the game.

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SHAPEUP By chance I trudged a New York street, Where seamen of all nations meet
And flags of every merchant fleet The rising sun each morning greet. I witnessed there a
shapeup scene, The strangest sight that I have seen, In all the lands where I have been
And I can boast of vision keen. To think that images of God For food and shelter and for
shod Should willingly to shapeup plod To say the least is strange and odd. A question then
in rhyming scroll I'd like to ask you one and all: Tony, Pat and John and Paul And other
names I can't recall. Should sons of labor cringe and crawl To handle freight and wheel
and haul Like felons bound with chain and ball Whens are long and pay is small When if
you wish you could install A hiring system fair to all Rotating from your Union hall And let
the [strawboss?] on you call Not stand in shapeup like a thrall

This poem rang from coast to coast - quoted in New York Post article on strike 1936.
Pilot, Voice of the Federation, and all West Coast strike bulletins. OFF AMBROSE LIGHT
Off Ambrose Light, thick fog hangs low And cautiously the tug-boats tow, As ships [?]
passing to and fro With speed reduced from "full" to "slow" Are guided by the bell-bouy's
song Ding-alang, ding-dang, Ding—dang—dong. Off Ambrose Light, dark is the night
The moon lends not her kindly light, Nor 'e 'en is there a star in sight, But right ahead,
afflickering bright A bell-bouy clangs its warning song- Ding-alang, ding-dang Ding—dang
—dong. Off Ambrose Light, there's ship 'en route For places North, East, West and South,
As seagulls plane and soar about And squawk "safe trip" as they pass out While bell-bouy
chimes its good-bye song- Ding-alang, ding-dang, Ding—dang—dong. Off Ambrose
Light, from o'er the Main, The ships return to port again With lumber, oil, and coal and
grain And hearts have waited not in vain For comes the bell-bouy's "Welcome song- Ding-
alang, ding-dang. Ding—dang—dong. Left-Rudder